

Together: Living Together in Christ-centered Community

“Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul . . .” - Acts 4:32

Look around you. In our culture today, there is more division than there is unity. Some division is trivial. Some is life changing. And yet, into this landscape, the Gospel speaks a profound truth: in Christ, we are united. We are together.

Do your students know the difference between friendship and fellowship? Are your students unified with one another, regardless of their differences, by their common love for Christ? Is your youth ministry a safe place where students feel valued and cared for? Do your students lead out into culture, as one, motivated by the mission of advancing the Gospel?

If you want to help your students live out their answers to these questions, then TOGETHER is for you. Teach TOGETHER and challenge your students to embrace a Christ-centered community.

Small Group Outlines

The small group times in *Together* work in perfect concert with the Large Group outlines. Each Small Group session builds on the corresponding theme of the Large Group Outline.

Session 1: Togetherness Is God’s Plan

What We Want Students to Learn: That we are together because togetherness is God’s plan for His people.

Main Scripture: Ephesians 2:11-22

Session Snapshot: Together. It’s a concept that is central to our understanding of what it means to be a Christ-follower. You see, God has always worked in and through community. It’s crazy to think about, but God Himself has always existed in community (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). God’s original vision for Eden was to populate a perfect existence with His creation, together with Him. God called a people to Himself, Israel, that understood their identity as a great togetherness; they were God’s chosen people after all. The New Testament Church is an awesome picture of God growing His family, extending the offering of “togetherness” to all who would come to salvation through faith in Jesus, Jews and Gentiles alike. Your local church, and specifically your youth group, is an extension of God’s intention to gather His people together. Your students were designed to be in community with each other. This lesson will help set the stage for your study of *Together*.

Session 2: Togetherness Runs Deep

What We Want Students to Learn: That being together is more than physically being with each other. It’s being emotionally invested in one other.

Main Scripture: John 13:34-35

Supplemental Scripture: Galatians 6:1-2; Acts 2:42-45

Session Snapshot: We are called to love one another. In fact, Jesus said that the world would be able to look at us and know that we were different simply because of how Christians cared for each other. Jesus made this statement to His disciples mere hours before He was arrested. Elsewhere in Scripture, we see how this love is supposed to look. We'll focus on two specific areas in this lesson, helping your students understand exactly what it looks like to love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Session 3: The Purpose of Our Togetherness

What We Want Students to Learn: That our togetherness has a purpose. It's drawing people close to Jesus . . . together.

Main Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

Supplemental Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

Session Snapshot: We don't come together in our churches simply to hang out together. While fellowship is a key part of the togetherness of the Church, it's not the only part. Part of being together as a Body of Believers is drawing people closer to Christ. Sometimes, this means bringing people into our communities who do not know Jesus at all. This also means that we're supposed to be working together to bring each other deeper in our relationship with Jesus. Call it togetherness with a purpose. The Church is God's plan to both introduce Himself to the lost, and to grow closer with His children. This lesson will examine what the Bible says about this, and how we might practically go about doing this.

Session 4: Truly Together

What We Want Students to Learn: That God's plan for us is to be united by our love for Jesus, regardless of our differences. Together means together.

Main Scripture: Acts 4:32-34

Supplemental Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-3

Session Snapshot: When we come to faith in Christ we join a family. We call this family the Church. We are joined together with the global (and historical) body of all who believe in Jesus. But more importantly, for our purposes, we're joined together with a local congregation. We call this our church family. And like any family, there are times we may not see eye-to-eye with each other. If we expand this definition of family to the believers in our community, or our State, we can quickly see how even more differences of opinion may arise. And yet, we are called by God to be united in our purpose and mission. While we won't always share the same opinions, we must work to foster a sense of unity, a sense of *togetherness*, in light of our shared love for Jesus. That's the challenge this lesson will issue to your students.